

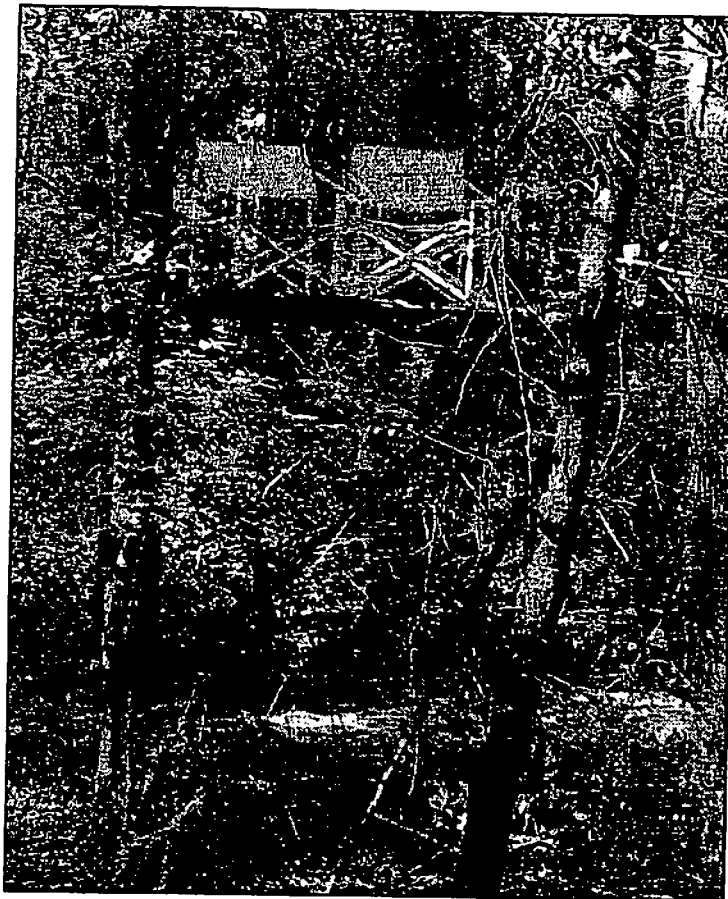
Vandals Tread on Trail's Debut

By KEITH L. MARTIN

While the weather cooperated, it was vandals who rained on the grand opening for the new wildflower trail behind the Gershom Bradford House on Tremont Street on Sunday.

A joint effort between the Duxbury Rural and Historical Society and the Community Garden Club for nearly a year, the trail was being readied for its unveiling as part of last weekend's Cultural Cultivations event through the town's Cultural Alliance.

The Elizabeth Trail, named after Elizabeth Bradford, sits behind the Bradford House in the woods between the Duxbury Yacht Club golf course and the house and features large patches of ferns and myrtle along with a myriad of wildflowers.



Vandals trampled vegetation along the new Elizabeth Bradford Trail and also left garbage and a pair of lawn chairs in a tree-house near the path.

Photo by Karen W. Wong

According to Lois Jenner of the Community Garden Club, volunteers from around town had been spending months preparing the trail for tours on Sunday, including Boy Scouts who recently cleared and spread wood chips throughout the trail. The Garden Club had also purchased 20 markers placed throughout the trail with numbers on them that corresponded to a brochure identifying the numerous species of plant life along the trail. The task of identifying all the vegetation along the path took over three hours on Friday, said Jenner.

Jenner said that upon arriving to the site on Sunday, she discovered that vandals had torn up all the markers and damaged the trail by riding what looked like a four-wheel drive vehicle all around it, destroying some of the ferns and wildflowers. In a tree-house at the rear of the property, some of the markers were discovered along with litter, and two lawn chairs and farming tools such as a rake and shovel were found strewn around.

"We had all worked so hard to put this together and we were really excited for the opening, to hand out materials [on the wildflowers] and more and it turned out that we couldn't use it because we had

no markers," said Jenner. "It made me sick, absolutely sick."

Jenner said that Duxbury police were called on Sunday afternoon and examined the damage to the path. Lt. Chip Chubb of the police department said an investigation into the matter is ongoing.

"This is so unfortunate, especially the day before people were invited to come and see it. We've had a lot of volunteers work on this who put in many, many hours."

**- Patrick Browne
DR&HS**

Patrick Browne, Executive Director of the DR&HS, said Monday that those who did attend the unveiling of the trail did not get to see all of it due to the vandalism.

"This is so unfortunate, especially the day before people were invited to come and see it," he said. "We've had a lot of volunteers work on this who put in many, many hours."

Browne said the Society is now in the process of seeing how to keep the trail open to

the public while still maintaining it is not open to future damage.

Lynn Smith, treasurer of the Community Garden Club and chairwoman of the Cultural Alliance, said that the path has been a project 10 years in the making and became a reality thanks to the DR&HS and a grant from the Financial Group Inc. and the National Garden Club.

The \$2,000 grant, she said, was the largest distributed in Massachusetts and one of 100 issued throughout the United States to identify the path and help maintain it. Smith said the trail bears Elizabeth Bradford's name because she collected wildflowers in 1836 and put them in a book that is still in the collection of the Duxbury Free Library.

Smith said that the Garden Club is planning to work with the library on preserving the book as well as raising funds to make copies of it so visitors to the path can compare the wildflowers of today with those of Duxbury's past.

"It would be wonderful to see what Elizabeth saw 170 years ago as you walk the trail," she said.